

Spring 1998

ICS Lecture Series 1998: Performance and Cultural Politics

Bowling Green State University. Institute for the Study of Culture & Society

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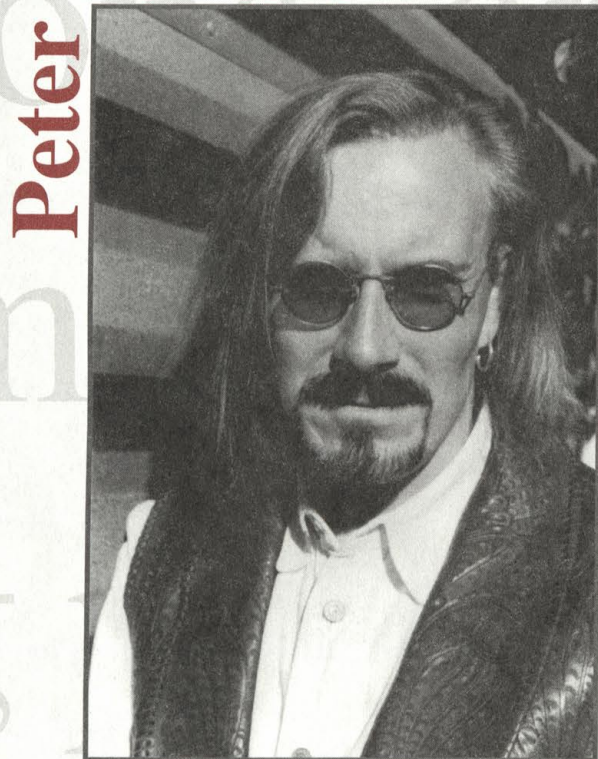
"It is impossible to write the pleasurable embodiments we call performance without tangling with the cultural stories, traditions, and political contestations that comprise our sense of history Viewing performance within a complex matrix of power, serving diverse cultural desires, encourages a permeable understanding of history and change."

Elin Diamond, *Performance and Cultural Politics*

The Spring 1998 PROVOST'S LECTURE SERIES, presented by the Institute for the Study of Culture and Society (ICS), offers a cluster of events about performance in relation to pedagogy, culture, history, and identity. The series includes talks and performances by radical pedagogue Peter McLaren, performance theorist Peggy Phelan, and performance artists (and cultural critics) Guillermo Gómez-Peña and Roberto Sifuentes.

Performance is about the movement and negotiation of bodies, boundaries, and meanings in space and time. All four speakers chosen for this series suggest that performance never simply reflects our multiple realities, but actually participates in the making of history, culture, and identity. Between the performing body (both on stage and off) and the larger culture, there is a permeable border. This border can be contested and breached to make real bodies matter in real time and to reach new understandings of our individual places within a given culture and our shared responsibility to challenge anything deemed "natural" and inevitable.

McLaren



**Unthinking Whiteness:
Towards a Revolutionary Multiculturalism**
Wednesday, February 18, 1998
Grand Ballroom, Union – 3:00 PM*

"The tension between multiple ethnicities and the politics of universal justice is the urgent issue of the new millennium. How are educators to approach this question with a politics both progressively critical and optimistic?" Critical pedagogy speaks to specific forms of intelligibility and rationality, but it is also about the history of the soul."

Peter McLaren, *Revolutionary Multiculturalism: Pedagogies of Dissent for the New Millennium*

PETER MCLAREN is an internationally acclaimed educator, social theorist, and pioneer of critical pedagogy. He encourages students to become educated not simply to adjust to the norms of society but to actively re-shape society in the interests of social justice for all. Currently a Professor of Education with the Graduate School of Education and Information Studies at UCLA, Professor McLaren is the author, co-author, editor and co-editor of twenty books and monographs. His most recent books are *Revolutionary Multiculturalism: Pedagogies of Dissent for the New Millennium* (Westview, 1997), *Counternarratives* with Henry Giroux, Colin Lankshear, and Mike Peters (Routledge, 1997), and *Critical Pedagogy and Predatory Culture* (Routledge, 1995). Professor McLaren is best known for his speaking and writing from a transdisciplinary perspective in the following four areas: critical pedagogy, multicultural education, critical ethnography, and critical theory.

*reception to follow

Many thanks to United Christian Fellowship, supporter of Peter McLaren's presentation.

ALL EVENTS ARE FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

For further information, call Kara Jennings at
The Institute for the Study of Culture and Society
372-0585 or Vicki Patra at 372-0565
Poster Designer: Holly Vaske



The Institute for the Study of Culture and Society presents

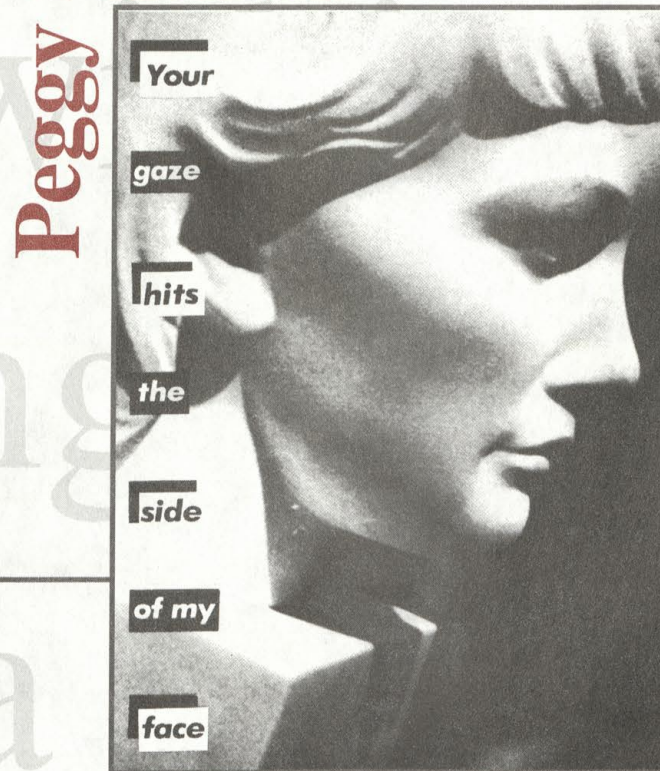
PROVOST'S LECTURE SERIES

Performance and Cultural Politics

"The psyche has no material form and yet in describing it we tend often to give it a body. From the mystic writing pad to the ghost in the microprocessor, we have attempted to speak of the psyche as something subject to wounds, to tears, to traumas. We believe it can be made healthy. We treat it, in short, as a body."

Peggy Phelan, *Mourning Sex: Performing Public Memories*

Phelan



Barbara Kruger, *untitled*, 1979

**Performance and Politics:
Ronald Reagan and Death in America**
Friday, March 20, 1998
Community Suite, Union – 2:30 PM*

PEGGY PHELAN, Professor at Tisch School of the Arts at New York University, is one of the most renowned scholars in the area of Performance Studies. Her talk examines why performance has become one of the central figures that shape our understanding of culture, identity, and politics in the 1990s. Her most recent book, *Mourning Sex: Performing Public Memories* (Routledge, 1996), explores how performance reflects the narratives of sex, loss, and mourning that permeate our lives, our culture, and our theatre. Advocating what she calls 'performative writing,' Phelan creates an extraordinary fusion of critical and creative thinking which erodes the distinction between art and theory, fact and fiction. Professor Phelan also wrote the ground-breaking book *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance* (Routledge, 1993) and is co-editor of *The Ends of Performance* (NYU, 1998) and of *Acting Out: Feminist Performances* (Michigan, 1994). Her major areas of academic interest include feminist and queer theory, psychoanalysis and performance studies.

*reception to follow

Gómez-Peña

Guillermo



Sifuentes

Roberto

**Lecture/Demonstration:
Ethno-Cyborgs and Artificial Savages**
Grand Ballroom, Union – 7:00 PM*
Tuesday, April 7, 1998

**Mexterminator:
An Interactive Diorama Performance**
Joe E Brown Theatre, University Hall – 11:30 AM to 4:30 PM
Thursday, April 9, 1998

"We cannot deny the processes of interdependence that define our contemporary experience as North Americans. For better or for worse, our destinies and aspirations are in one another's hands. The real tasks ahead of us are to embrace more fluid and tolerant notions of personal and national identity, and to develop models of peaceful coexistence across nationality, race, gender, and religion. Culture and education are at the core of the solution [to prepare us for] the complexities of living in [the] multiracial borderless society of the next century."

Guillermo Gómez-Peña, *New World Border*

GUILLERMO GÓMEZ-PEÑA is an internationally acclaimed multimedia performance artist, social and cultural critic, and author. His performance work and critical writings have played a crucial role in framing the issues of cultural diversity, identity, and US-Mexico relations. He has won a well-deserved reputation as one of the most effective interpreters of cultural otherness in the United States. Gómez-Peña uses his work with performance art, video, film, audio art and radio, installations, poetry, journalism, and critical writing to explore cross-cultural issues and North/South relations. He is the author of several books, including *The Temple of Confessions* (Power-House, 1997), *Warrior for Gringostroika* (Graywolf, 1994), and *The New World Border* (City Lights, 1996), for which Gómez-Peña won the National Book Award. Gómez-Peña is the first Chicano/Mexicano artist ever to receive a MacArthur Fellowship (1991-1996).

ROBERTO SIFUENTES has collaborated and toured with Guillermo Gómez-Peña in performances, lectures, and installation projects throughout the US, Europe, and Latin America. Sifuentes contributes his multimedia experiments combining visual art, music, poetry sound, and computer technology to such performances with Gómez-Peña as *The Temple of Confessions*, an interactive performance/installation (1996); *El Nafazteca: Cyber-Aztec TV for 2000 AD*, an interactive performance art television special broadcast to over 6 million homes; and *The Dangerous Border Game*, an experimental Spanglish lounge opera.

Gómez-Peña and Sifuentes provide a culturally challenging experience, using the humanities as an ethical framework. The programs which they perform at BGSU are unique in their design to elicit audience interaction and participation by creating a safe space for dialogue and community building. While the lecture/demonstration is a multimedia overview of their work using video, slides, and performance, it is less a history of them as artists than an interpretation of experience within and between multicultural communities. The diorama is a living display that alternates between intense audience interactions and quieter moments of tableau.

*reception to follow

Many thanks to the Ethnic Cultural Arts Program and the Theatre Department, major supporters of the Gómez-Peña and Sifuentes presentations.